

Perceptions of human security in democratic South Africa

Opinions of students from tertiary institutions

Norman Mlambo¹

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, the end of apartheid in 1994 brought relative peace and state security and an end to state involvement in violent conflict, both internally and externally. The end of apartheid also appeared to fit in well with the end of the Cold War between the Western democracies and the Eastern communist block. The hope then was that, while the end of apartheid would bring a regional peace dividend in southern Africa, the end of the Cold War would usher in a global period of peace and security.

However, the world in general has not enjoyed the peace dividend expected after the end of the Cold War. In fact, the state of international peace and security is much worse today than it was at the end of the 20th century. International terrorism and the global war against it have left the world much more vulnerable, especially after the events of September 11 in the United States of America. These developments continue to affect South Africa. Moreover, even in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, the post-apartheid era did not bring tranquillity to the region. New conflicts erupted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho and Zimbabwe, which continue to affect South Africa negatively.

PURPOSE

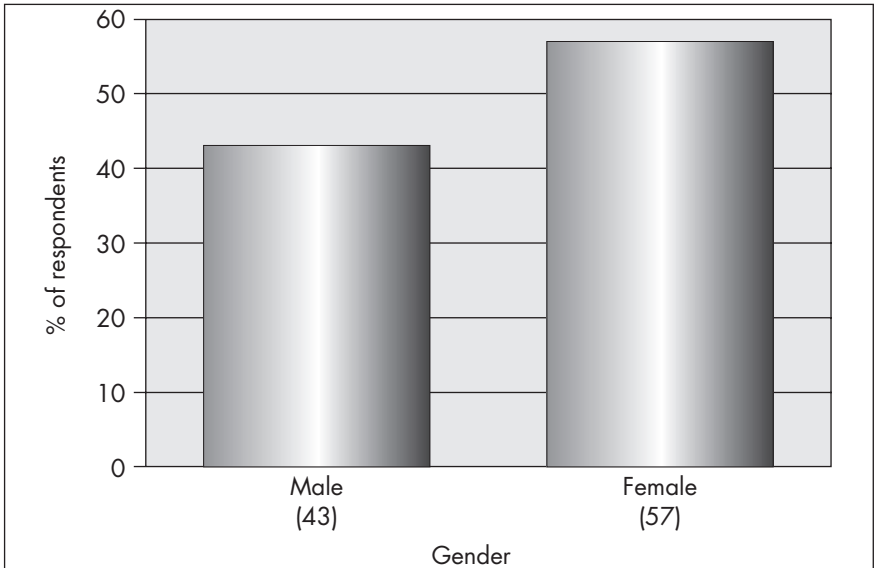
This paper seeks to analyse the perceptions and reactions of selected students to human security threats in South Africa in the post-apartheid era and how these perceptions might affect the country's human security-related policies. It aims to provide an understanding of the security concerns of selected students in South Africa and how policymakers

Table 1 Nationality of respondents

Nationality	Percentage of respondents
South Africans	83
Non-South Africans	17
Total	100

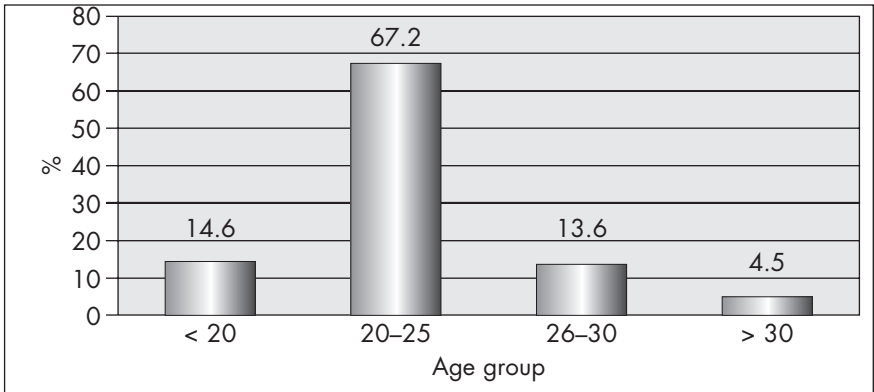
Source: Research results.

Figure 1 Gender of respondents



Source: Research results.

Figure 2 Age group of respondents



Source: Research results.

might address these concerns. This study is driven by the observation that voices of students are not adequately projected in policy formulation on matters of security. The paper is also an attempt by civil society to make a positive contribution to a national discourse which is crucial to the formulation of a national human security policy.

PERCEPTIONS OF HUMAN SECURITY

Reports of personal expressions of whether individuals feel secure in their environments in South Africa are few. On student impressions, one important, utterly repugnant report entitled 'Scared at school' describes sexual violence against girls in South African schools. The report observes that:

“South African girls often encounter violence in their schools. South African girls continue to be raped, sexually abused, sexually harassed, and assaulted at school by male classmates and teachers. For many South African girls, violence and abuse are an inevitable part of the school environment.”²

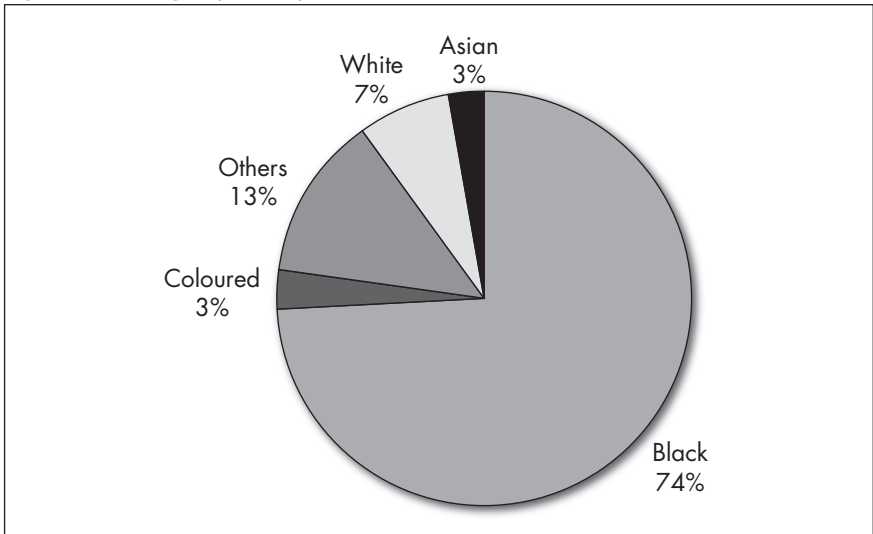
One report records youth views on crime in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality in the Eastern Cape.³ The report concentrates on identifying the most common risk factors that push youth into crime and it searches for these factors in the youths' family life, school experience, community and peer relationships.

This report continues the exploration of youth experiences of human security issues and focuses on selected students in tertiary institutions in South Africa. The study begins with a general question on personal security as follows: “In general how would you describe your personal security situation?” The result is that 13% of respondents feel very secure, 64% just secure and 23% very much insecure. This information is obtained from questionnaires administered to 14 institutions of higher learning throughout South Africa from where 828 respondents took part. Of that number, 83% were South Africans and 17% were foreign; 57% were females and 43% were males; 74% were black, 3% coloured, 7% white, 3% Asian and 13% others. This information is presented in Table 2 and Figures 1–4.

STATE SECURITY

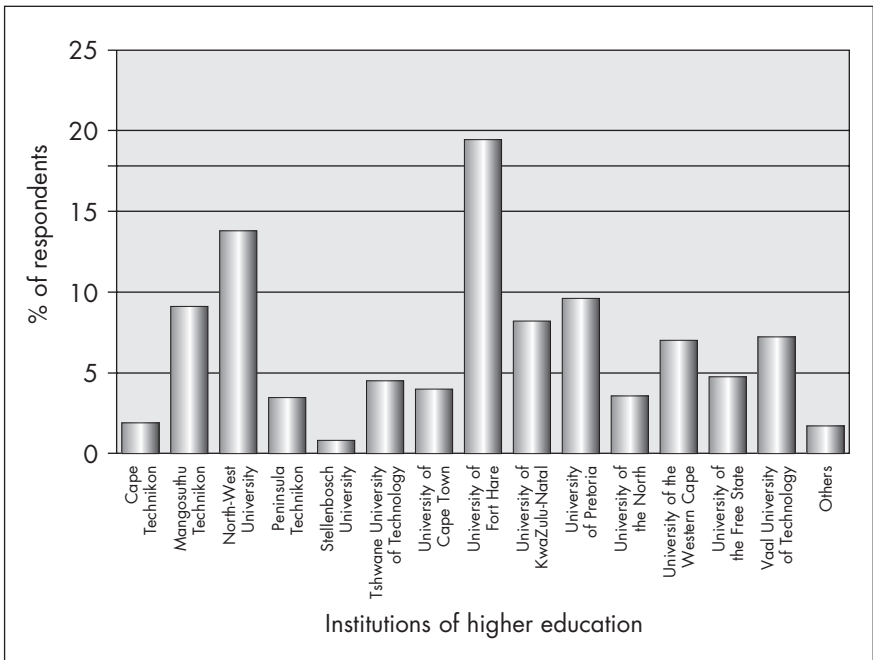
In order to place the research on selected student perceptions of security into context, in the following two sections it is important to describe

Figure 3 Ethnic group of respondents



Source: Research results.

Figure 4 Participating institutions



Source: Research results.

the major issues in security discourse in South Africa, using secondary sources as references.

Traditional notions of security have for a long time been state-centred, focusing on external aggression.⁴ In South Africa, the apartheid notion of security was the security of the state against a perceived communist takeover. This dovetailed well with Cold War perceptions of Western security, which revolved around keeping the communist threat at bay. Connected to that, the apartheid notions of security included the suppression of anti-apartheid movements, which were seen as fronts for the communist threat. This is the context in which intelligence and security agents pursued anti-apartheid activists from townships such as Soweto across borders into Mozambique, Botswana, Zimbabwe and even beyond. With the end of the Cold War, however, there is not likely to be any such security threat to the South African state based on ideology either now or in the near future.

The democratic government that came to power in South Africa in 1994 set out, among other things, to change the manner in which defence issues were being handled in the country. This process was achieved by the adoption and implementation of three important documents:

- The Defence White Paper, 1996;
- The Defence Review, 1998;⁵ and
- The White Paper on South African Defence Related Industries, 1999.

Together, these three documents changed the country's defence policy, posture, roles, composition, structure, size and tactics. They changed the general understanding of security from mere state security to national security, regional security and human security. They emphasised the defensive and non-militaristic nature of the South African security system. They also established clear civilian control of the military, subjected South African defence to conform to democratic governance and international law, rationalised defence production and procurement, and enabled the integration of formerly belligerent forces.

To date, however, state security remains inadequate despite the various peace and security initiatives. One government report states that this is particularly the case “in respect of the state of protection accorded to Very Important Persons and their residences; the security of government information (which is compounded by the absence of an enabling policy regarding vetting); and the general uncertainty that attends the state of readiness of security-related disaster management systems”.⁶

In March 2004 President Thabo Mbeki received death threats from unidentified people. The threats came a day after a gunman was shot dead outside the Cape Town home of the former president, Nelson Mandela. The gunman, Major George Makume, was a disgruntled ex-soldier with a history of mental illness who claimed that he was on a 'revenge mission' after being discharged from the South African National Defence Force.⁷

A growing trend worldwide is that people are placing their security above all else, including above the protection of human rights. This has seen an international public tolerance for suspending civil rights in the face of threats to public security – both criminal threats to personal security and terrorist threats to national security, creating new challenges for human rights activists. It has also been pointed out that in their preoccupation with the rights of perpetrators, human rights activists have ignored the rights of victims or potential future victims and are thus failing to advance social justice.

FROM STATE SECURITY TO HUMAN SECURITY

Since the end of the Cold War there has been growing international recognition that security means much more than the state's ability to counter external threats. While it remains true that the state is still the major player in providing security, it is also recognised that state security alone is no longer adequate to ensure human peace, security and development. For the ordinary South African, and for the majority of civil society, however, the most pressing security issues are those that affect individual lives, and that is human security.⁸

The United Nations Commission on Human Security qualifies the definition of human security as follows:

“Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential.”⁹

Human security ensures the creation of “political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity”.¹⁰ These systems are often threatened by menaces that may emanate from outside the particular state or nation, but which in some cases may have ‘internal’

or intra-state causes, or may be caused by the state itself. For South Africa, some of these menaces that threaten human security include the following:

- violent crime
- rape
- terrorism
- racially motivated violence (of the Boeremag type)
- politically motivated violence
- farm murders/attacks and land conflicts
- illicit arms and drug deals
- private armies (mercenaries)
- illegal migration
- xenophobia-related violence
- illegal firearms
- poverty and inequality
- regional instability

This study looks at how selected South African students are affected by these and other security threats, and what they consider to be the major threats to their security and that of others.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

The general perception inside South Africa and even outside is that, between 1994 and 2004, political activity was conducted in a democratic, transparent and peaceful manner. In this research, respondents were directed to focus on the issue of political violence in South Africa. In line with the general feeling in South Africa, the majority of the respondents (53.3%) said political violence is low in the country. Table 2 illustrates the research findings.

Table 2 Perceptions of political violence in South Africa

	Scale	Percentage of respondents
How serious is political violence in SA?	High	40.8
	Low	53.3
	None at all	5.9

Source: Research results.

However, a significant minority (40.8%) think that political violence is still high in South Africa and that perception is perhaps influenced by some incidences explained below. The South African tourist publication *Let's Go: South Africa* considers political violence a major security concern for South Africa. As a result, the publication warns tourists that:

“Travellers should maintain a low political profile and a low level of political involvement at all times. Avoid carrying political leaflets or buttons, wearing shirts with political logos, attending political speeches and rallies, or criticizing a country’s president, ruling party, police, or armed forces in public.”¹¹

Political violence was indeed a big problem in the 1990s when Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), African National Congress (ANC) and United Democratic Movement (UDM) activists often clashed. One prominent case was the assassination on 25 January 1999, of Sifiso Nkabinde, the general secretary of the UDM in the Richmond area of KwaZulu-Natal. One of Nkabinde’s bodyguards was also killed later that day. On the same day, 11 members of one ANC-supporting household were shot dead, while they were asleep, in Mswazini, Richmond.¹²

However, by 2004 that violent political situation had changed. The interventions that were implemented by political leaders have evidently reduced the levels of political intolerance and violence, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and some areas of the Eastern Cape and Gauteng. Parties now tend to use constitutional and legal means to settle disputes and achieve their objectives, though isolated incidents of political violence still do occur.¹³ For example, in January 2005 Thomas Shabalala, a member of the IFP National Council and of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Legislature, was gunned down at his home in Lindelani, north of Durban. The IFP Youth Brigade chairman, Thulasizwe Buthelezi, said of the incident: “When fathers are murdered in front of their children it is a clear indication that something is very wrong in society. In fact, it is like a loud red neon light, flashing that people are not safe.”¹⁴

POLICE BRUTALITY

Cases of police brutality, police violence and police accountability in South Africa are well documented.¹⁵ However, the majority of respondents (48.2%) are of the opinion that police brutality in South Africa has been low in the ten years following the advent of democratic

rule, even though a significant number (47.1%) said police brutality was still high in the country. Table 3 illustrates these impressions.

Table 3 Police brutality

	Scale	Percentage of respondents
To what extent is police brutality a problem in SA?	High	47.1
	Low	48.2
	Non-existent	4.7

Source: Research results.

Police brutality in post-apartheid South Africa was highlighted in April 1999 after a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) report showed white South African police officers beating and kicking black suspected car thieves. One of the men later died in hospital. The video caused such uproar in South Africa that Thabo Mbeki, then Deputy President, was compelled to issue a statement blaming the whole incident on the legacy of apartheid.¹⁶ In November 2000 another video was aired on South African national television showing members of the North East Rand Dog Unit setting their dogs on three Mozambican immigrants.¹⁷ The dogs were shown savaging the three men, after which the police further brutally assaulted the men physically and hurled racial abuses at them. Besides these high-profile cases, there are numerous reports of excessive use by the police of force and torture, as well as unnecessary shootings and deaths in police custody.¹⁸

In South Africa, despite the fact that much of the population experienced at first hand the military police's brutality under apartheid, the public has supported legislation that gives the police the right to shoot.¹⁹ However, some of the police shootings have been fatal. On 8 January 2000, Yusuf Jacobs was shot by police who were attempting to disperse a demonstration by Muslim organisations against the visit to Cape Town by the British Prime Minister. A number of other people were injured, but Yusuf Jacobs died in hospital four days later.²⁰ On 30 August 2004 police fired rubber bullets at 4,500 youths who were demonstrating near the town of Harrismith, along the highway linking Johannesburg and Durban. One youth died and 20 were injured.²¹ As a result of such cases, there have been some calls for police to be more careful with their use of force. One report claimed that between 2003 and 2004 some 800 people died in the hands of the police.²²

In their country report on human rights practices for the year 2004, the US Department of State – which normally praises the South African government – chose to condemn South Africa’s human rights record for 2004. The major point raised is that “deaths due to the use of excessive force by security forces and deaths in police custody were serious problems”.²³ The report was in turn condemned by the South African government as not reflecting the true situation in the country.

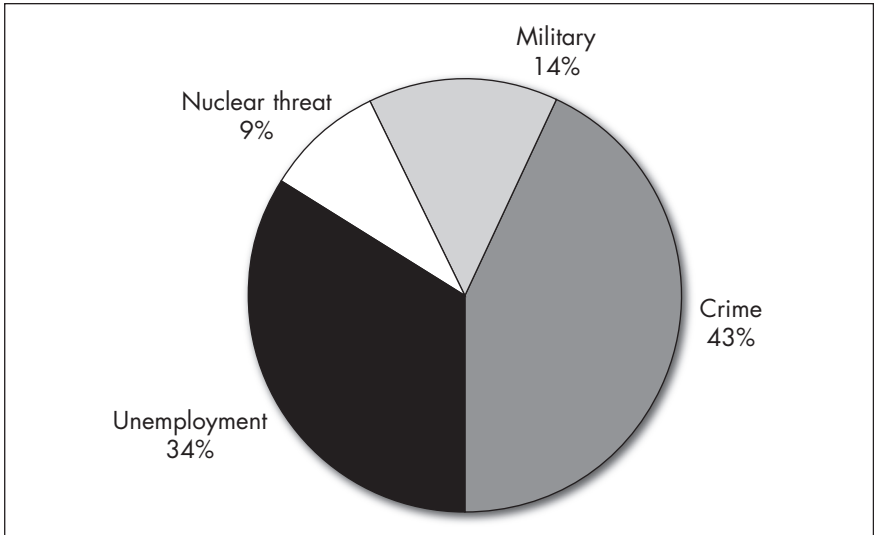
EXTERNAL SECURITY THREATS TO SOUTH AFRICA

In southern Africa, the end of apartheid was followed by new regional conflicts and challenges such as regional hegemonic and balance of power struggles and conflicts over resources. The DRC conflict, which erupted in 1998, soured relations between the then South African president, Nelson Mandela, and Zimbabwe’s Robert Mugabe over the use of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Also in 1998, historically peaceful Lesotho erupted into violence, triggering the military intervention of South Africa and Botswana. The Zimbabwean land, political and economic crisis which erupted in 2000 has brought much anxiety not only to South Africa, but to other countries in the region such as Namibia.²⁴ Political and other pressure groups in South Africa have constantly demanded South African action against Zimbabwe; some have even suggested military invasion.

Against this background, respondents were asked the question, “Do you consider some foreign countries to pose threats to the security of South Africa, and if so, what kind of threats?” To the first part of the question, 52% of respondents responded yes, some foreign countries are a threat to South Africa, 28% said no and 20% were uncertain. Regarding the second part of the question, the majority of respondents did not think that foreign countries are likely to pose military threats to South Africa. Some 43% of respondents thought that foreign countries, or rather foreigners, are likely to increase crime in South Africa and 34% said that foreigners increase the levels of unemployment in the country. Only 14% thought that any foreign country may pose a military threat to South Africa and 9% thought that there may be a nuclear threat to the country. Some of these statistics are illustrated in Figure 5.

A follow-up question on external threats required participants to name countries which they thought posed the biggest threats to South Africa. A list of 20 countries was supplied and respondents could name as many countries as they wanted. The result was that 38% thought

Figure 5 Possible security threats by foreign countries



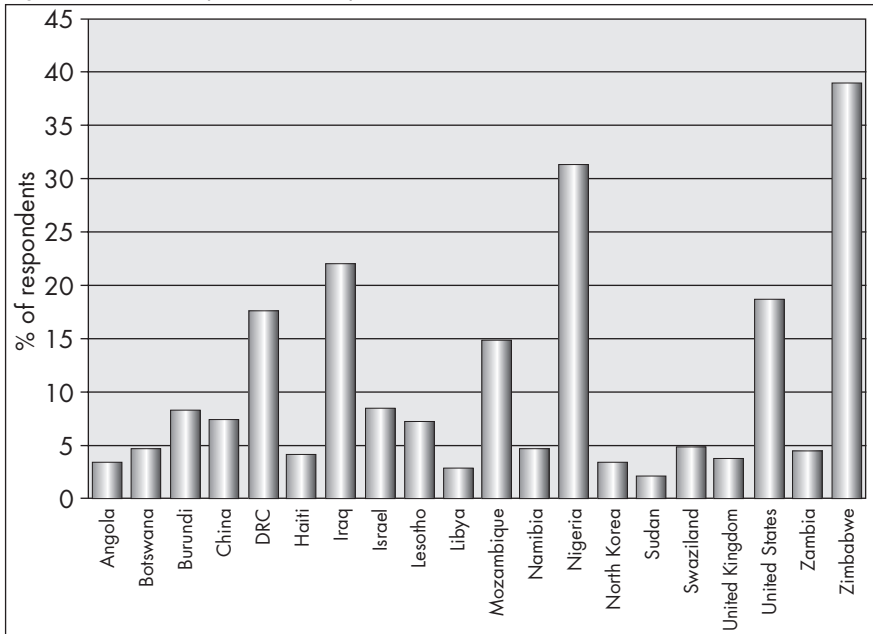
Source: Research results.

that Zimbabwe was South Africa’s biggest threat, followed by Nigeria at 31%, Iraq at 22%, the US at 18%, the DRC at 17% and Mozambique at 15%. Other countries named as threats were Burundi, Israel, China, and Lesotho, but these were named by less that 10% of the respondents. The listed country that was named by the least number of respondents and therefore perceived as least threatening to South Africa was Sudan.

THE ZIMBABWEAN THREAT PERCEPTION

The perception of Zimbabwe as the biggest security threat to South Africa is fuelled mainly by negative media reports on Zimbabwe and by a number of other factors which our respondents were well aware of. The first is that the South African public know very little of the capability of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces. The curiosity increased when in 1998 Zimbabwe decided to go to war in the DRC on the side of the late Laurent Kabila and managed to stay on for three years despite international pressure and the formidable Rwandese and Ugandan forces. Not only did Zimbabwe pull its military weight in the DRC in the face of South Africa, but it also managed to draw in Angola and Namibia onto Kabila’s side under cover of the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, despite protestations from former

Figure 6 Countries perceived as potential threats to South Africa



Source: Research results.

South African president Nelson Mandela who, as chairman of SADC at that time, wanted to have full control of the Organ. More recently, the mystery of the unknown strength of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces was deepened by reports of Zimbabwe secretly buying sophisticated aircraft from China, reportedly to counter South Africa's much talked about and scandal-ridden arms procurement deal.

Another factor which came up in 2004 is the mercenary connection. A group of mercenaries (most of them South African citizens) were arrested in Harare in February 2004 on their way to effect a military coup in Equatorial Guinea. Despite the facts and the complicated legal and international aspects of the case, some of it touching on the British Thatcher family, the South African press continued to portray the arrest of the South Africans in Zimbabwe as an unfriendly act by 'a paranoid dictator', Robert Mugabe.

There are other factors such as the perception of threats to job security posed by the increasing number of Zimbabweans living and working in South Africa, whether legally or illegally, the fear of a spillover into South Africa of Zimbabwe-style violent land invasions,

and a general anti-Mugabe campaign led by such people as Tony Leon and the Southern Africa Bishops Conference – to name a few. A most recent factor is the political heat caused by the friction between the Confederation of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the African National Congress (ANC) as a result of disagreements on how to respond to the unceremonious expulsion by the Zimbabwean authorities of COSATU fact-finding missions from Harare.²⁵

Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa has also expressed his discomfort with the Zimbabwean government which, he said, makes a mockery of African democracy.²⁶ Even though the ANC government has publicly pronounced a policy of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe, privately the South African government is alleged to have engaged a ring of spies to keep an eye on the activities of both the Zimbabwean government and the ruling party, ZANU PF (Zimbabwe African National Union (Patriotic Front)).²⁷ However, since 1994 neither the Zimbabwe government nor the South African government has been regarding the other as a threat to its security. In fact, the South African government was the leading nation in the SADC pronouncement that Zimbabwe's March 2005 parliamentary election was credible and democratic, despite some protestations to the contrary.

XENOPHOBIA

A major problem in South Africa today is the perception that people have of foreigners. In a 2001 survey, Jonathan Crush found that the majority of South Africans believe that immigration and migration impact negatively on the country.²⁸ Locals believe that migrants – especially from African states such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Nigeria – are responsible for the high rate of crime in South Africa, take jobs meant for South Africans, and bring diseases to the country. As a result, there have been a number of high-profile violent assaults on migrants by citizens and a number of foreigners have lost their lives. This is despite the fact that major reason for foreigners (especially those from African countries) coming to South Africa is that they are trying to escape war and violence in their countries of origin.²⁹ However, the South African government, especially President Thabo Mbeki, has made several calls on citizens not to regard migrants from Africa as enemies. There have also been programmes to educate the public and the media that an irrational hostility towards migrants is uncalled for. One such programme is the Roll Back Xenophobia (RBX) Campaign initiated by the South African Human Rights Commission in 1998.

Table 4 Nationalities considered foreigners

Nationality	Percentage of respondents
Americans	7.5
Asians	5.5
Africans (non-South Africans)	28.0
Europeans	8.0
All of the above	51.0

Source: Research results.

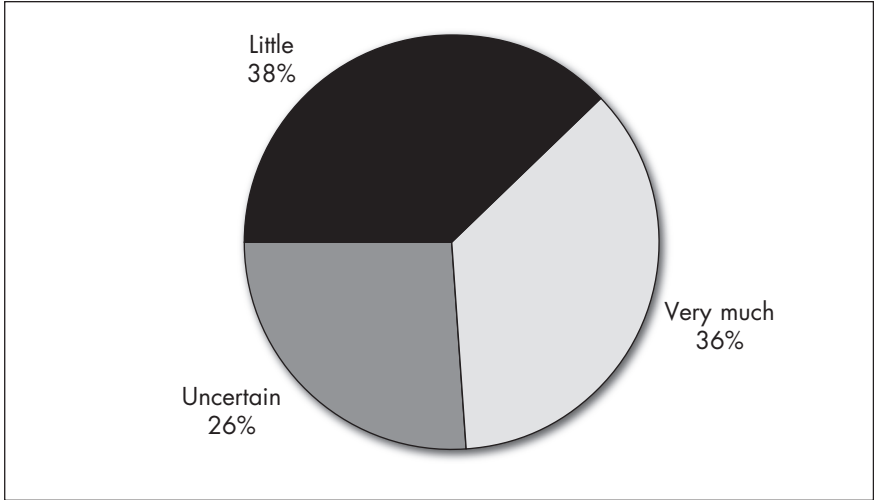
In this research, one question sought to measure the perception of who is considered by respondents to be a foreigner. Although 51% of the respondents said all non-South Africans are foreigners, a significant minority (28%) said only Africans from the rest of Africa are considered foreigners. On a follow-up question of whether it is mainly African migrants who disturb the peace in South Africa, again the impression of a significant minority (36%) was a yes, while a narrow majority of 38% said no and 26% were uncertain. This uncertainty may have been caused by the involvement of South African-based British subjects such as Mark Thatcher in coup plots in other parts of Africa. (This theme will be explored in the next section.)

MERCENARIES

The problem of mercenaries continues to haunt not only South Africa, but the continent as a whole. Early in 2004, a group of mercenaries were arrested in Zimbabwe allegedly on their way to effect a military coup d'état in Equatorial Guinea. The next day, another group of mercenaries were also arrested in Equatorial Guinea. Both groups – a total of 85 men – were travelling with South African passports. The regional, continental and international speculation as to the likely fate of such a large group of South African citizens greatly disturbed the South African public. Internally there were demonstrations and court processes against the South African government in an attempt to force South Africa to demand the extradition of these people from Equatorial Guinea and Zimbabwe to South Africa.

The whole mercenary saga was complicated by the arrest, in Cape Town, of Mark Thatcher, son of former British prime minister Margaret

Figure 7 African migrants disturbing peace in South Africa



Source: Research results.

Thatcher, on charges of bank-rolling the attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea.³⁰ The case is being handled through the legal systems of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Equatorial Guinea. Despite this, on the question of whether mercenaries are a threat to South Africa, only a small number of respondents (24%) thought that they are a big problem, while the majority (62.9%) was uncertain and 12.8% said mercenaries were not a threat at all. The uncertainty may have arisen from the fact that most of the mercenaries involved in the Equatorial Guinea saga were South African citizens and their commanders were British, a country that is not normally considered a threat to South Africa.

TERRORISM

Although there is no agreed-on UN definition of terrorism, there are various conventions and protocols which forbid organisations from practising terrorism and prohibits states from sponsoring and/or financing terrorism.³¹ South Africa has inevitably been caught up in the current global war against terrorism. In 2004, two South Africans were apprehended in Pakistan, reportedly among Al Qaeda operatives. The incident caused much panic in diplomatic and security circles in South Africa and even beyond. Some South Africans have been linked to terrorism even as far as Mexico and the US. Also, South African

Table 5 The mercenary threat to South Africa

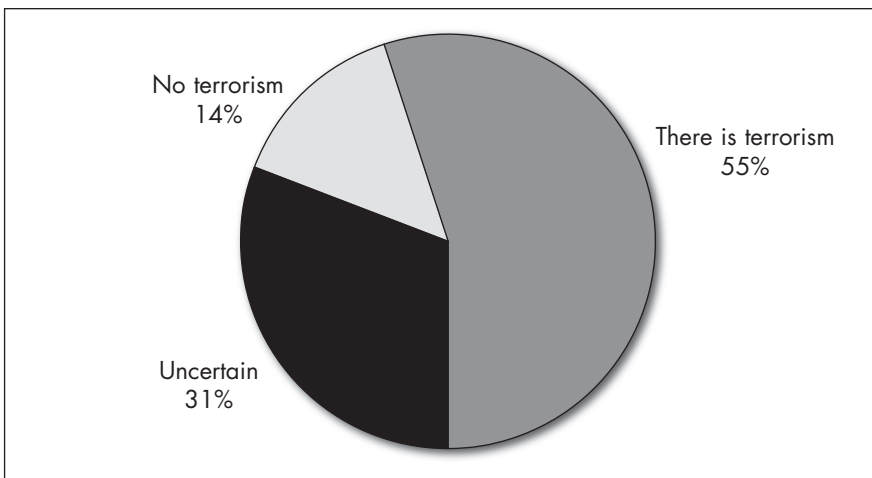
	Percentage of respondents
Very big threat	24.3
Uncertain	62.9
No threat at all	12.8

Source: Research results.

private security companies and individuals are operating in war-torn Iraq, providing security to people and installations. Some South Africans have been killed in Iraq.³² More chilling perhaps, were media reports that suggested that South Africa was at one time targeted by terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda.³³

Despite the above facts, the majority of respondents (67.1%) still felt that global terrorism posed very little threat to South Africa. However, 55% felt that there was terrorism in South Africa and 44.6% said that religious differences caused most of that terrorism. These views may have been influenced by the activities of the Muslim group People Against Gangsters and Drugs (PAGAD), which terrorised some urban areas in the 1990s. In their fight against drug dealers and gangsters, PAGAD activists broke into several police stations to steal guns. They gunned down any suspected drug dealers, bombed gay night clubs, restaurants and tourist attractions, and killed magistrates and judges, even in court.³⁴

Figure 8 Views about the existence of terrorism in South Africa



Source: Research results.

Table 6 Extent to which global terrorism is perceived as a threat to South Africa

	Percentage of respondents
Very much	17.1
Little	67.1
Not at all	15.8

Source: Research results.

THE WHITE RIGHT

Some 78% of respondents said that racism is still a big problem in South Africa. The political violence and intolerance that seemed to characterise some South African provinces (notably KwaZulu-Natal and some areas of the Eastern Cape and Gauteng) in the 1990s gave way to a new type of political violence perpetrated by the ‘White Right’, although on a much smaller scale.

Since 1991 the town of Orania in the Northern Cape has been maintaining an exclusive Afrikaner identity. The town of only 700 inhabitants cherishes old Afrikaner customs practised under apartheid. People of colour are not encouraged to stay or visit the town.³⁵ Recently the town introduced its own currency, the Ora, a move that some analysts think is a dress rehearsal for secession. However, locals maintain that they are simply trying to preserve their culture and also that they are protecting themselves from violent crime so rampant in the rest of South Africa.³⁶

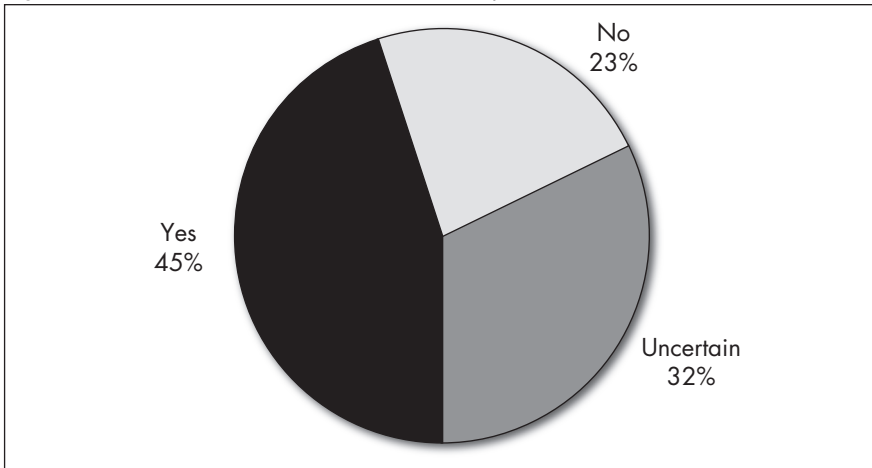
The most extreme of the white right has been the Boeremag, a group of Afrikaner commandos who in 2002 were accused of planning to topple the government of President Thabo Mbeki through a military coup.³⁷ Besides the nostalgia for apartheid, the Boeremag believed that they had a religious mission to maintain apartheid as a system. In 2002 a Boeremag group planted bombs in Soweto and other places in South

Table 7 The problem of racism

	Reponse	Percentage of respondents
Is racism a problem in South Africa?	Yes	78.8
	Uncertain	15.6
	No	5.6

Source: Research results.

Figure 9 White extremists could cause serious problems in South Africa



Source: Research results.

Africa. After the explosion of eight of the bombs on 30 October, a Boeremag press release announced that:

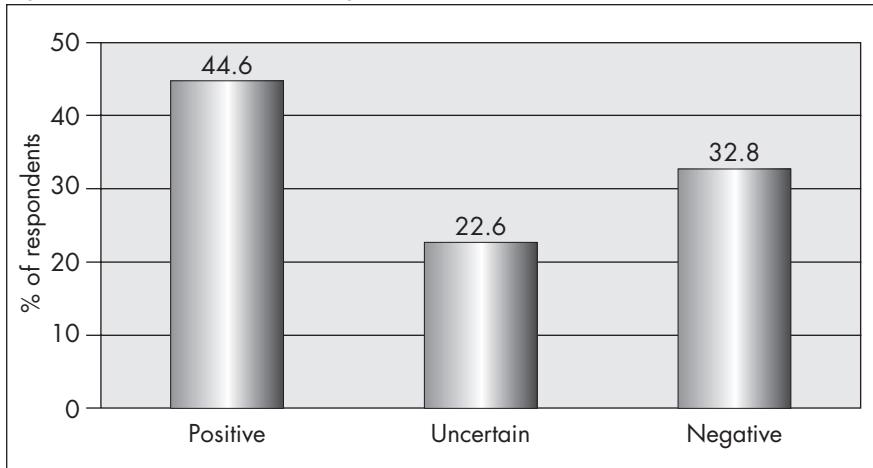
“Hereby the Boeremag declares that we give all honour to our Heavenly Father. The enemy should know that they are not challenging the lower order of the Boerevolk, but the God of Blood River.”³⁸

Many analysts have commented on the readiness of the Boerevolk to associate the planting of bombs with God. What is clear is that Afrikaner groups like the Boeremag revel in being the chosen people whom God placed in South Africa for a specific mission. This feeling was well captured by one member of the Boeremag during the trial when he said:

“I am a Boer. We are fighting God’s battle here on earth. Every Sunday of my life I sat in the Dutch Reformed Church and was told that apartheid was the will of God. Then Johan Heyns comes along and said apartheid was a sin. I am white with fury [‘wit-woedend’]. Nobody could have done more church than me – we were ‘churched’ to death in order to become good Boere.”³⁹

However, despite the much publicised and continuing court case against the Boeremag group, 45% of respondents still felt that such white

Figure 10 Views on whether religious differences cause terrorism in South Africa



Source: Research results.

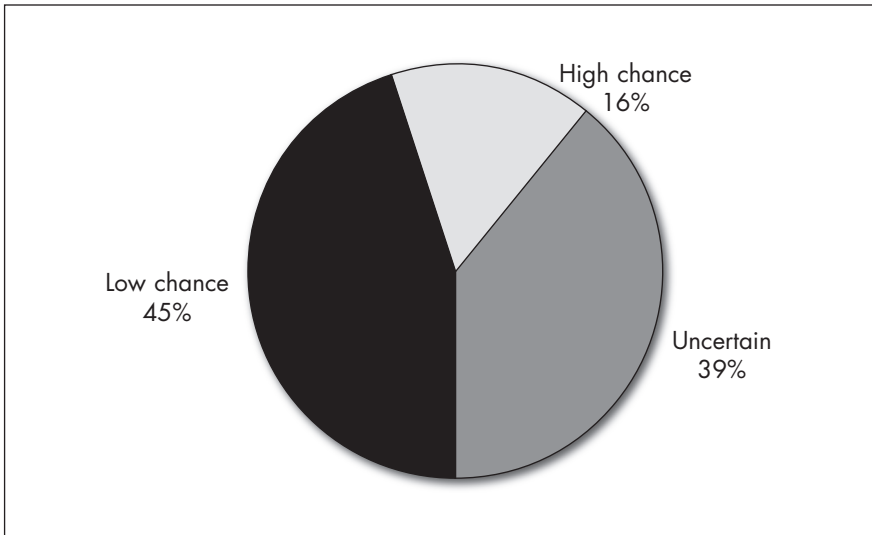
extremists do not pose serious problems for South Africa. This may be because there is general agreement that majority rule is here to stay and that minority white power is no longer an option in South Africa.

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

Despite the Boeremag's association with the conservative Christian sector, inter-faith conflict is almost non-existent in South Africa. This is so mainly because there is general agreement that the South African state is neutral, and treats different faith communities evenhandedly. The state is in fact regarded as an arbiter which recognises that South Africa is multi-religious and that each faith community ought to be treated equally and with respect. The state is in turn empowered by the constitution, which in Section 15 of Chapter 2 guarantees "freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion". The one inter-faith sore point has been between the Muslim and Jewish communities as they "express both anguish and involvement over the spillover of the Middle Eastern conflict into South Africa".⁴⁰

State response to right wing and other terrorist groups has been swift and decisive. As noted earlier, in the 1990s the Muslim group PAGAD took the law into their own hands in their fight against crime in Cape Town and other urban areas. On the basis of coordinated investigations, the law enforcement authorities rounded up the leaders of the group and

Figure 11 Chances that South Africa may be attacked with nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction



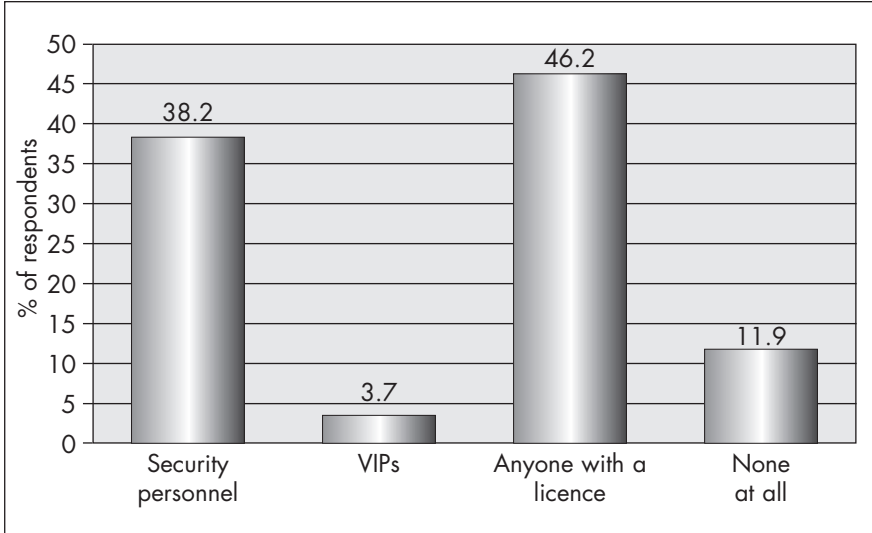
Source: Research results.

some of the targeted gangsters, confiscated large amounts of firearms, ammunition and explosives, and foiled some assassination plans. The law enforcement authorities are also working with their counterparts abroad with respect to cross-border crime and international terrorism.⁴¹

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) include any nuclear, radiological, chemical and biological weapons and the systems and missiles for their delivery.⁴² Although South Africa is known to have experimented with nuclear technology and chemical warfare during the apartheid era, the post-apartheid period is generally considered to be free of weapons of mass destruction. Also, the neighbouring countries which are perceived to pose a threat to the security of the country, such as Zimbabwe, are themselves free of weapons of mass destruction. The majority of respondents (45%) also think that the chances that South Africa may be attacked with weapons of mass destruction are low. However, a significant minority of 39% were uncertain, while only 16% thought that the country could be attacked with nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction.

Figure 12 Views as to who should be allowed to possess guns in South Africa



Source: Research results.

SMALL ARMS

Despite the many experiences and reported cases of serious crimes committed using firearms, 46.2% of respondents said anyone who can obtain a licence should be allowed to possess a firearm.

Police records show that between 1995 and 2003 some 193,000 firearms were reported stolen. Of these, only 125,000 were recovered.⁴³ In April 2003 the South African Police Service launched Operation Sethunya to get rid of illegal arms circulating in society. Between April and October 2003, 14,140 illegal weapons were recovered, 1,565,273 rounds of ammunition confiscated, and 3,206 people arrested for illegal possession of firearms and ammunition.⁴⁴

There is a close relationship between national peace and security and the socio-economic and political well-being of people. The proliferation of small arms intensifies violence and perpetuates crime. The effects of the uncontrolled flow of small arms lead to obvious links between arms, conflict and violence against individuals. This has also led to a situation where it has become much more difficult for the police to carry out their duties effectively. By their very nature, the illegal procurement, possession and transfer of firearms are precursors to other criminal activities. This is more so given a situation where third parties less linked

to national governments are sometimes engaged in the transfer of even these sophisticated weapons.

On the positive side, the South African Police Service continues to score successes in their fight against illegal firearms. Their efforts are also being enhanced by new gun laws which will compel approximately two million South African gun owners to take stringent competency tests when reapplying for licences.⁴⁵ The Firearms Control Act, which came into effect in July 2004, aims to establish a comprehensive and effective system of firearms control and management. However, there is still a lot of work to be done by the police, as huge quantities of firearms continue to be discovered. In July 2004 large quantities of arms and ammunition were discovered in a disused complex in Ulundi, KwaZulu-Natal. These arms were linked to some politicians of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).⁴⁶ The weapons were destroyed together with others as part of Operation Sethunya.

CRIME

A major cause of insecurity in South Africa is the high rate of crime, especially violent crime such as murder, rape and hijacking. Contrary to expectations, crime trends did not decrease with the end of apartheid in 1994 – rather, the levels of recorded crime stabilised at the high rates recorded in 1995 and 1996 and some forms of crime continued to increase up to 2000.⁴⁷

A National Victims of Crime Survey carried out by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) found that between September 2002 and August 2003, nearly one quarter of all South Africans had been victims of crime. The survey also found that although police reports indicate that reported crime decreased between 1998 and 2003, feelings of insecurity among South Africans increased from 25% in 1998 to 58% in 2003.⁴⁸

However, official reports continue to emphasise government crime prevention strategies, which, they say, are having a positive effect on crime. These include the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), the National Crime Combating Strategy (NCCS), and the Integrated Justice System (IJS). These measures have had the effect of stabilising and reducing some crime trends. One official report shows that with the exception of common assault and theft, the 20 most serious crimes in South Africa have been decreasing.⁴⁹

Perceptions of crime do not always coincide with the reality on the ground. The South African Police Service are of the opinion that crime

has been declining in absolute terms since 1994. With the exception of robbery with aggravating circumstances, illegal possession of firearms and drug-related crime, all crime figures are reportedly declining. Some selected figures of actual police crime statistics are given in the table below.

PERSONAL SECURITY AND CRIME

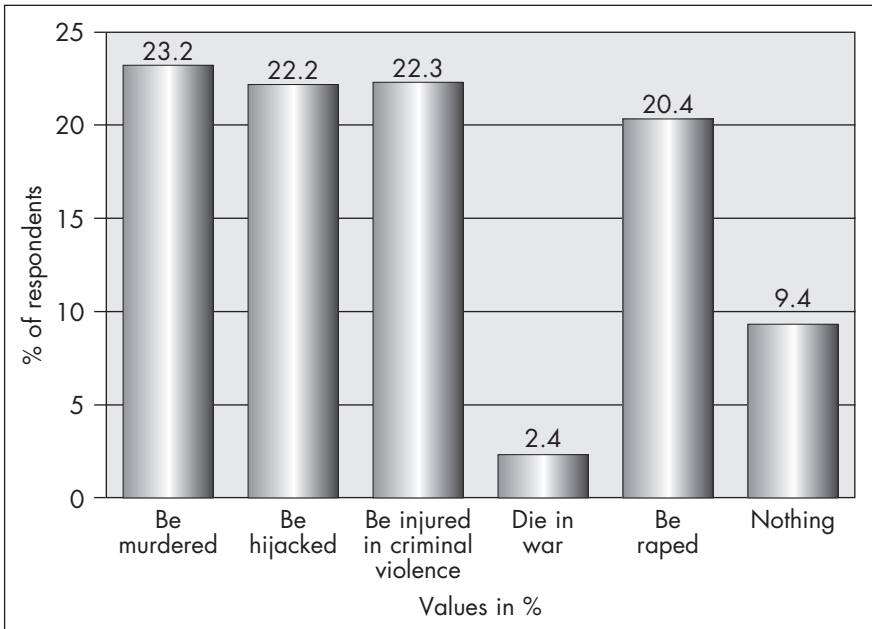
The main national disturbance to peace in South Africa for both young and old is violent crime. In the study of youth perceptions of crime in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Municipality, it was found that more than 28% of the participants had been victims of violent crime between July 2002 and July 2003. Robbery topped the list of crimes in that study, with close to 60% of victims saying they were robbed at knife- or gun-point.⁵⁰

Table 8 Incidence of crime per 100,000 of the population

Crime categories	1994/ 95	1996/ 97	1998/ 99	2000/ 01	2002/ 03	2003/ 04
Murder	66.9	62.8	59.8	49.8	47.4	42.7
Rape	115.3	126.7	118.3	121.1	115.3	113.7
Attempted murder	69.1	70.4	70.4	64.4	78.9	64.8
Assault GBH	555.8	570.4	566.3	630.2	585.9	560.7
Robbery with aggravating circumstances	218.5	163.0	220.6	260.3	279.2	288.1
Arson	28.2	24.9	23.9	20.5	20.2	19.0
Housebreaking, residential	596.2	602.9	652.7	694.0	704.0	645.2
Car theft	272.8	239.8	255.9	229.0	204.9	190.0
Stock theft	121.9	103.5	98.8	95.1	102.7	89.0
Illegal possession of firearms	28.3	31.4	35.0	33.8	34.8	36.3
Drug-related crime	118.4	99.5	94.0	102.9	118.4	135.1
Drunken driving	66.2	60.4	59.8	58.4	48.7	53.7
Commercial crime	162.5	153.2	150.9	152.4	123.7	120.4
Carjacking		31.0	37.6	34.2	32.3	29.7
Bank robbery		1.4	1.2	1.1	0.3	0.1

Source: South African Police Service Annual Report, 2003/04, p 19.

Figure 13 Day-to-day personal fears of what might happen



Source: Research results.

The survey finds that, on a national scale, the major fear of South African students (23.2%) is that they might be murdered. This is corroborated by other reports, one of which is from the Gun Control Alliance (GCA). In one of their reports, the GCA writes that:

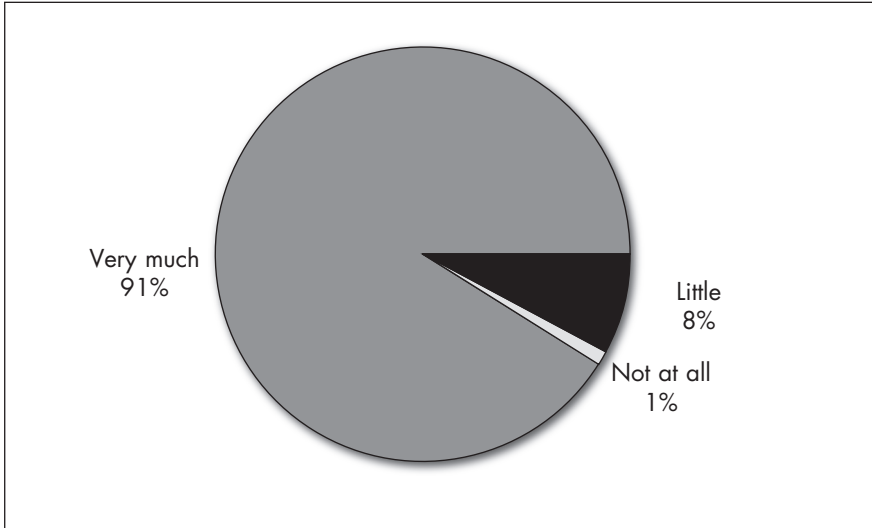
“The youth of South Africa are its future leaders. But many youngsters will not live to fulfil this role. In South Africa, homicides are the leading cause of death for males between 15 and 21 years of age.”⁵¹

A 2003 report by the ISS also cites murder as the crime most feared by South Africans. In this survey, other fears cited include injury resulting from criminal violence (22.3%), hijacking (22.2%) and rape (20.4%). Comparative data is presented in Figure 13.

POVERTY AND ECONOMIC INSECURITY

The large majority of respondents (91%) were of the opinion that economic insecurity causes violent crime in South Africa.

Figure 14 Contribution of economic inequality to violent crime



Source: Research results.

The survey did not unpack the economic dimensions during field work, but enough secondary information was gathered to cover the most important questions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report for South Africa for 2003 states that about 48.5% of the South African population currently live below the national poverty line. The report points out that income distribution remains highly unequal and is deteriorating, that the gini coefficient is rising and that the human development index (HDI) is falling.⁵²

There are few up-to-date national analyses of poverty for South Africa. Among the most used are figures compiled by Statistics SA and the annual All Media and Products Survey (AMPS). In a 2002 study, Lawrence Schlemmer used data from these sources to compile a series of poverty measures based on the poverty line of R400 and disaggregated them according to population groups (Table 9).⁵³

From this and other tables, Schlemmer concludes that the number of households living below the poverty line has increased from 1989 to 2001.⁵⁴

The 2003 South African Human Development Report highlights the fact that poverty in South Africa continues to have gender, race, family type and spatial dimensions. The report also shows that 11.9 million of the poor are female, compared to 10 million males. It also shows that

Table 9 Poverty trends in South Africa, 1989–2001

	Minimum living level	African (%)	Coloured (%)	Indian (%)	White (%)
1989	R400	51	24	6	3
1993	R755	50	26	8	3
1996	R960	57	22	9	3
1997	R1,040	55	21	6	4
2001	R1,270	62	29	11	4

Source: Lawrence Schlemmer, *Focus* 26, 2002, p 21.

in 2002 the poverty rate among the African population living under the national poverty line was eight times the poverty rate among the white population.⁵⁵

A recent study (2004) focuses on current trends and future policy options in narrowing the economic divide in South Africa and concludes that ten years after democracy, the country is still characterised by pervasive poverty and inequality.⁵⁶ This, and another report compiled by various academics as part of a study by the Ecumenical Foundation of Southern Africa (EFSA), argues that social stability in South Africa is at risk because of growing inequality. The EFSA report asserts that:

“The single most important issue facing South Africa 10 years after the transition to democracy is breaking the grip of poverty on a substantial portion of its citizens ... This means that approximately 18 million out of 45 million people have not experienced the benefits of our newly found freedom. This poses a moral challenge to all South Africans – to work together towards the economic and social integration of the poorer section of our fellow citizens.”⁵⁷

Inequality is prevalent in many countries in the Third World and in a number of developed countries as well. In South Africa, however, three centuries of colonial rule and four decades of apartheid introduced a number of context-specific causes of poverty and inequality. Nina Hunter et al highlight some of these historical factors, such as the stripping of people of their assets, specifically land; distorted economic markets and institutions through racial discrimination; violence; and general destabilisation of certain sections of the population.⁵⁸ It is against

this background that the current and unacceptable levels of poverty must be understood.

INCOME INEQUALITY AND INSECURITY

Leibbrandt et al⁵⁹ show that up to 2000, only 6% of South Africa's population enjoyed over 40% of national income. This experience of income inequality carries over to the social indicators as well, with the HDI reported by the UNDP revealing the significant spatial and racial differences in South Africa. In 1991, while white South Africans had an HDI similar to that of Canada or Israel, the HDI score for sections of the African population was lower than that of Swaziland. A provincial comparison also shows that in 2000 the score for Limpopo Province was lower than that of neighbouring Zimbabwe.⁶⁰

Another important variable is wealth inequality. Ownership of financial wealth is a significant source of income. Therefore, inequality in the distribution of wealth implies a corresponding inequality in the distribution of dividends, interest, rent and other income received by those who own assets.⁶¹ Wealth also provides security and brings with it some political power.

In South Africa the average white family has much more home and vehicle equity and many more financial assets of all types than the average black family. These include interest-bearing bank accounts, bonds, equity and land. In 2000 some 37.3% of household disposable income in South Africa came from property, and most of that property is controlled by the white population.⁶²

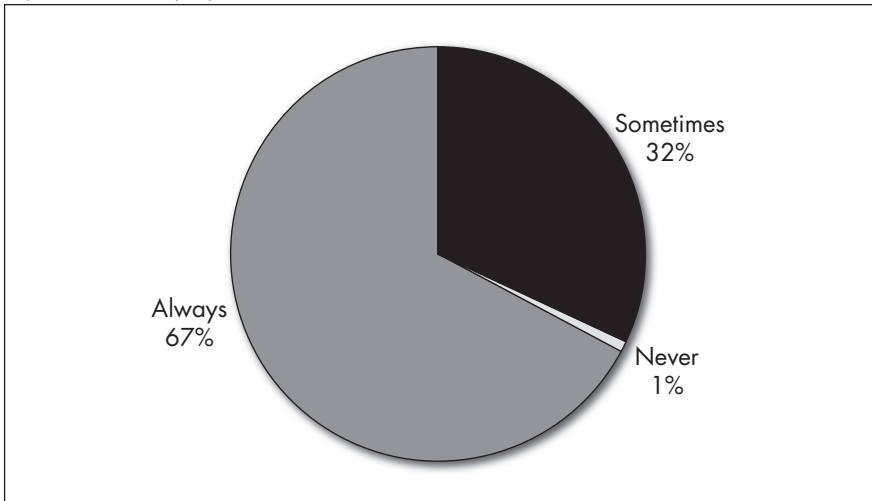
UNEMPLOYMENT AND INSECURITY

The majority of respondents (67%) were of the opinion that unemployment is one of the major causes of crime.

In 1995 the South African government set out to create a million jobs through its Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) over a period of five years. It was estimated that the exercise would cost R15.5 billion. Between 1995 and 2002, some 1.6 million new jobs were created by this and other employment creation programmes. This represented an average growth rate of employment of 2.1% per year in both the formal and informal sector of the economy.⁶³

By 2003, the number of people in employment in South Africa, including the informal sector, had risen by 2.3 million, an increase of

Figure 15 Unemployment is a serious cause of crime



Source: Research results.

17.7%. At the same time the demand for jobs increased by 5.3 million. The net result is that there were 3 million more unemployed people, pushing the total number of unemployed to 5.25 million, of which 59% have never worked and 70% were long-term unemployed (more than one year).⁶⁴

THE EFFECTS OF HIV/AIDS

Another factor contributing to insecurity is the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. In 2004 about 15.2% of South Africans were estimated to be suffering from HIV/AIDS – most of them from poor communities. Poverty reduces the ability of poor people to cope with the disease, while the loss of employment due to the disease and the death of wage earners contribute to the increase of poverty in the already poor communities. The majority of respondents (46%) listed disease as the major cause of recent death of people close to them, with accidents coming second, violence third, and old age fourth.

LIFE EXPECTANCY

Although the survey did not ask questions on life expectancy, the ultimate measure of human security is how long individuals can be expected to

Table 10 Cause of death of persons close to the respondent who had died recently

Cause of death	Percentage of respondents
Disease	46.0
Accident	20.4
Violence	13.4
Old age	19.1
Other	1.1

Source: Research results.

live. In South Africa, population projections using the 1991 and previous census results did not take HIV/AIDS into consideration. In these calculations, an upward trend in life expectancy at birth was assumed. Statistics SA calculated life expectancy tables for the four population groups for the years 1985, 1994 and 1996 using these assumptions. The methods of calculation changed after 1996 with the inclusion of the effect of HIV/AIDS. Table 11 shows the detailed life expectancy figures from 1985 to 2004 with the effect of HIV/AIDS taken into account.

LAND CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are two dimensions to the issue of land conflict in South Africa. The first is the slow pace of land reform in the country and the potential that is created for mass revolt, both in rural and urban areas. The second dimension is arguably a criminal, rather than a land question, and has to do with the spate of farm attacks that have plagued the country in the last ten years.

Table 11 Life expectancy at birth, 1985–2004

Year	African	Coloured	Asian	White	South African
1985	60.7	58.7	62.7	68.8	61.8
1991	62.7	60.1	63.8	69.3	63.5
1996	60.4	59.8	64.3	68.1	61.4
2001	52.3	57.6	63.8	64.9	54.2
2004	49.2	56.2	63.5	63.6	51.4

Source: Statistics South Africa, Mid-year population estimates, South Africa 2004, p 11.

Table 12 Views about how the land question will be resolved in South Africa

Means	Percentage of respondents
Violently	8.4
Uncertain	17.5
Negotiation	74.0

Source: Research results.

The majority of respondents (74%) were of the opinion that the land question in South Africa will be resolved through negotiation. Only a small percentage (8.4%) thought that land reform in South Africa might be violent, while 17.5% were uncertain.

Like other southern African states, South Africa is faced with the challenge of addressing the injustices of the past, in particular with regard to land ownership and other economic opportunities. By 1993 white South Africans owned about 85% of the land in South Africa. The ANC government tried to address the situation by, among other steps, passing the Land Restitution Act of 1994, the Land Reform (Labour Tenants) Act of 1996, and the Extension of Security of Tenure Act of 1997. The new government also set up the National Land Committee, a Land Claims Commission, and a Land Claims Court. The aim of the process was to decide on land restitution claims up to the cut-off date of December 1998. However, by the end of 1998, only 68,878 cases of land restitution had been dealt with by the Land Claims Court, and only 41 of those had been settled.⁶⁵ Owing to unforeseen complexities involving land claims, the deadline for settling claims was extended to 2005. By April 2003 some 36,686 claims had been settled, out of a total submission of 79,000 claims, and by February 2005 the number of settled claims had risen to 57,000.⁶⁶ The Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs has since announced that the cut-off date for settling land claims has again been extended, to 2007.⁶⁷

In the meantime, a number of individuals, groups and organisations have been agitating for a faster land reform process. One such group is the Landless People's Movement. The movement charges that the new South African government promised land to the landless as part of the national liberation project, and yet ten years after apartheid, only 2% of the country's land has been transferred from white to black ownership.⁶⁸ The movement popularised its agitation for land in Durban in 2001 during the United Nations Conference on Racism at which

they launched the Landlessness = Racism campaign.⁶⁹ The Landless People's Movement captured the limelight again in April 2004 when they campaigned for a boycott of voting by its members during South Africa's 3rd general election. Their campaign theme was No land! No vote!⁷⁰ The state responded by arresting some of the activists, a response which some people claim included excessive use of force.

While academic land discussions were going on, the situation on the ground was different. Illegal land occupations were taking place in the rural areas and in and around urban centres like Johannesburg. Unlike the Zimbabwean case, most of the land occupied by illegal settlers belonged to the government and there was little or no violence. Most of the disputes were settled through the courts. The Bredell land invasion near Johannesburg in 2001 is a case in point.⁷¹ Some 'squatters' occupied peri-urban state and private land in Bredell, Kempton Park, just outside Johannesburg. These people were evicted by security forces in a manner that some observers likened to apartheid-era forced removals.⁷² Some commentators have suggested that the strong tactics used by state agents to remove squatters from the land may be linked to the desire by South Africans to demonstrate that, unlike in Zimbabwe, the rule of law is effectively in force in South Africa.⁷³

FARM ATTACKS AND MURDERS

There has been a number of farm attacks and murders on farms throughout South Africa. Although black farm workers have been killed in some of these farm attacks, the majority of victims have been white farm owners. Between 1991 and May 2004 more than 1,630 white farmers have been killed.⁷⁴ The general trend has been that of a year by year increase in farm attacks. One activist who has been monitoring farm attacks, Jan Lamprecht, gives the figures reflected in Table 14.

A government commission of inquiry into farm attacks set up in 2001 reported in September 2003 that the motive for most of the farm murders was criminal and not racially or politically motivated.⁷⁵ These facts coincide with the opinion of the majority of respondents (50.3%) who said that farm attacks are simply criminal acts, while only 38% said they could be politically motivated. However, some groups do not agree with such conclusions and they have included South Africa on the list of countries being monitored for possible genocide. The list is maintained by a vigilante group called Genocide Watch and is accessible on the Internet.⁷⁶

Table 13 Farm attacks and murders

Year	Number of attacks	Number of murders
1991	327	66
1992	365	63
1993	442	84
1994	442	92
1995	551	121
1996	468	109
1997	434	84
1998	827	145
1999	834	136
2000	902	142
2001	809	142

Source: Jan Lamprecht, Farm murders in South Africa (from 1994–2004), <www.africancrisis.org/photos16.asp>.

Some activists against farm attacks have been very dramatic. Jan Lamprecht has posted some gruesome pictures of white people who have been murdered on farms around South Africa, with accompanying notes that stir up terrible emotions in anybody who views the pictures.⁷⁷ Lamprecht has also written articles encouraging white farmers in South Africa and the rest of southern Africa to take up arms in order to defend themselves. One such article ends as follows:

“While politically we are about 10 years behind Zimbabwe in terms of ‘land reform’ we could easily end up where they are. But, given the different demographics here, the Zimbabwean tactics need not succeed at all. A few well-trained Security operatives could easily chase off hundreds of unarmed or semi-armed black attackers. For farm invasions to then succeed they would have to be undertaken as military operations by the blacks.

“I believe that in the long term South Africa is actually slouching towards a fully blown race war – which is something I have written about in the past and which I believe can happen in 10–20 years time.”⁷⁸

As explained earlier, farm murders have been interpreted differently, the police taking them as mere criminal acts while some farmers

Table 14 Killing of white farmers in South Africa

Characterised as	Percentage of respondents
Criminal acts	50.3
Uncertain	11.7
Politically motivated	38.0

Source: Research results.

consider them to be politically motivated. This situation has created a security vacuum which in some way encourages some white farmers to look for alternative ways of ensuring the security of their families and properties.

CONCLUSION AND OBSERVATIONS

- Respondents were very much aware of the human security situation in post-apartheid South Africa.
- In general, respondents felt that the human security situation in the country is satisfactory.
- Student perceptions of state security in South Africa tend to coincide with official pronouncements. Perceptions of external threat to the country are however shaped mainly by the media, which in the past few years have been obsessed with developments in Zimbabwe. The predominant perception of respondents was therefore that Zimbabwe is the one country that poses the greatest security threat to South Africa.
- Respondents were comfortable with the current political climate in the country and considered political violence to be low and to be a thing of the past.
- Despite some high-profile cases of excessive use of force by the police, the majority of respondents still feel that police brutality in the country is low.
- On foreign migrants, respondents feel that although all foreigners cause one problem or the other, those migrants from the rest of Africa are particularly problematic.

- Mercenaries are not considered to be a threat, despite the high profile case of an attempted coup in Equatorial Guinea by a group of mercenaries operating from South Africa, the majority of whom are South African citizens.
- Respondents also appear to be more worried about internal acts of terrorism than global terrorism.
- Respondents were very much aware of the continued existence of racism in certain sections of South African society. However, the majority do not think that white extremists such as the Boeremag pose a serious threat to the country.
- The menace of firearms in society is known, but respondents still feel that carrying a licensed firearm is necessary for personal protection.
- Everyone is anguished by the prevalence of violent crime in the country. Respondent perception of the prevalence of murder, hijackings and rape coincides with police statistics.
- It is recognised that poverty and economic inequality are major causes of crime and human insecurity. Unemployment is particularly singled out as a major cause of insecurity.
- In recognition of the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS, the majority of respondents consider that disease is the major killer in the country followed by accidents, old age and lastly violence.
- The majority of respondents think that South Africa's land problem will be resolved by negotiation and that the farm killings experienced so far are just criminal acts and are not politically motivated.

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